The Commonweal

April 13, 1945

Maritain Leaves for Rome

C. G. Paulding

Henri Bernstein

Jacques Maritain

VOLUME XLI

10c

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NUMBER 26

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This Publishing Business

Religions and Religion

The man of two hundred years hence who has to write a thesis on twentieth-century religion will have much fun about the devastation wrought by Comparative Religion in the simple faith of college students. The young Christian comes to college, believing, shall we say, in baptismal regeneration. He learns that ritual cleansing is mentioned in the Upanishads, the Rig-Veda, the Zend-Avesta, the Code of Hamurabi and Aesop's Fables; and that water figured in the religious exercises of the ancient Egyptians, the Druids, the Australian Kamilaroi, the Iroquois and the Dog-Men of Darfur. These instances are chosen a little wildly, but wildness is of the essence of Comparative Religion. Anyhow, the student instantly drops his belief in baptism and goes in for Companionate Marriage.

Comparative Religion is wrecker-in-chief for the faith of our own generation as Darwinism for the two generations before ours. Nor can it be said that Catholic writers have met it with any dazzling success. With one or two exceptions, they have concentrated on showing the uniqueness of Christianity by watering-down the resemblances of other religious and this is a weary, endless tasks, because, with three or four thousand years and three or four thousand races to play about with, research is always bringing new resemblances to light.

In THE RELIGIONS OF MANKIND Otto Karrer, a German priest living in Switzerland, lifts the whole question on to a different plane. He teaches quite simply that because man is everywhere man, and God is always God: and because man's striving towards God is something God will never leave unassisted: there will and must be, in all religions whatsoever, true values—that is to say, resemblances to Christianity. What would really be shocking would be the picture of man reaching out to God in all his thousands of religions, and God ignoring him.

The uniqueness of Christianity does not depend on God's having ignored the countless millions who have lived and died before it or outside it: it does not depend at all on what Christianity teaches or practices: it depends on the uniqueness of the Incarnation, on the Godhead of Our Lord and the organic relation of the Church to Him. Obviously, what is absent or incomplete elsewhere will find its completeness here: but the one thing by which Christianity is *incomparable* is its organic relation to God-made Man. Thus we have the two related truths: the One True Religion founded by God; and the myriad religions made by men and, because they represented a striving for God, aided by Him and therefore in various measures showing forth true beliefs about God and religious practices in harmony with the deepest nature of man.

Once the religions of mankind are seen like this the difficulties vanish. Since the uniqueness of Christianity no longer depends upon the deficiencies of other religions, the discovery of new resemblances outside cannot affect our belief in the Church: and does deepen our sense of God's love for man and His providence working in all mankind.

(F. J. S.)

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The COMMONWEAL

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The Great Change

THE EASTER weekend has served to crystallize a change in the political balance of power and therefore in the whole political situation which is so extensive that its full significance is difficult to estimate. We are too close to it. The reason for the change is extremely simple. The progress of our arms—largely American arms, with some welcome British assistance—in the Pacific has certainly exceeded the expectations of the world if not of our own general staff. There is, of course, a great deal more fighting to do in that area, but there can be no question of the outcome, and the outcome will be specifically and almost exclusively an *American* victory. In addition to this, our successes in Europe have certainly exceeded expectations, and for political purposes we may view Germany as defeated. But what is most important her defeat is by no means specifically a *Russian* victory. At present writing the armies of the Western Allies occupy more German soil than do the armies of Russia, and it is altogether possible that Berlin itself will fall to a joint effort rather than to an exclusively Russian effort.

From the Russian point of view this is nothing like as pleasing a picture as, a few months ago, the Russians could justifiably have expected. From the American point of view it is now definitely desirable that Russia should not enter the Pacific war. And to Moscow itself any such action must seem unhappily reminiscent of Turkey's recent declaration of hostilities—as far as the Pacific is concerned. This means that Russian over-lordship in Asia is probably further away from fulfillment than it has ever been in recent history. America's amazing accomplishment—the substantial defeat of Japan coincident with a tremendous military effort in Europe—must certainly mean that our prestige in the Orient is at its highest level. And in forming any judgment on this subject we should bear in mind the simple fact that our soldiers and sailors get along very well in their contacts with Oriental peoples. There is no evidence from the Far East of even the minor and petty dislikes about which we hear in Europe.

Not only, then, does Russia find herself in a bad bargaining position in the Far East, where she had assumed that she would be greatly strengthened after the war was over, but her bargaining position in Europe is nothing like as strong as might have been expected even a few weeks ago. The result is clear. Russia is very cool about the San Francisco conference. London and Washington felt they could be tough about the Lublin Government and therefore categorically refused Russia's request that this government be represented at San Francisco. We are being monumentally slow about promising Russia any post-war credits. And Stalin, in turn, has been publicly pessimistic about the end of war in Europe, and the Russian press has gravely assured its people that no great victory has been won on the Western front.

Certainly it would be more than ungracious for us ever to forget the great service Russia rendered us when she bore the brunt of Germany's military power. Yet it would be idle to pretend that Russia's own uncertain ambitions afforded no cause for alarm. Her assurance at Yalta that the Lublin Government would be broadened had to be taken at its face value; to have done otherwise would have been to say that we cannot deal with Russia. Yet so far no progress has been made toward broadening that government. Events in Rumania, Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia could not help being disquieting. The trouble has been that until very recently the balance of bargaining power lay with Russia, which was an unhealthy and explosive situation. Hence the recent redressing of that balance augurs well for the world's peace. Of course if our bargaining power should increase to the point where there is an equally great unbalance, the situation would again be potentially unfortunate. But for the time being the fact that Washington and London can afford to be tough is all to the good. Stalin has always been known to admire toughness.

The great change in the political picture has also served to diminish the importance of what—if anything—takes place at San Francisco. Dumbarton Oaks was formulated before the change. If

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that conference should be postponed for a reasonable length of time, it seems quite possible that desirable changes in the Dumbarton Oaks plan might be effected there. If it meets on schedule, it is difficult to imagine that the action taken will be prompt or definite; either the meeting will have to be protracted over a considerable period of time, or else the really final working out of an international organization will be postponed to yet another conference. It is always dangerous to indulge in prophecy, yet what is said above seems so well to fit the logic of events that we are willing to take this much of a plunge in so dangerous a market.

Of course this entire analysis is pure *realpolitik*. It is a description of how power is at present distributed in the world. It takes into account no moral values. And yet if this analysis is correct, there is some reason to hope that the moral result will not be too bad. It would be pure hypocrisy for any American outside Mr. Browder's bailiwick to pretend that he would like to see fresh areas in the world under Russian domination. The Russian system, whatever one may claim for it, simply is not the kind of system under which Americans could live happily or under which Americans can imagine that others would live happily. We have a deep obligation to make every effort to live at peace with that system, yet this obligation does not require us to favor that system's extension. From our point of view our own system and many other systems beside our own are morally preferable. And hence we are by no means speaking or acting as enemies of Russia when we welcome a change in the balance of the world's power, which should not in any way be used aggressively against Russia but which is of very genuine value as an insurance policy against any aggressiveness which might turn up in Moscow.

Post-Hitler Germans

SELDOM have the observers in a foreign land been so united in their impressions as those whose first-hand accounts of occupied Germany have appeared the last few days in American papers. Whether our reporters overseas were recording their own expressions or quoting various GI's, the story always sounded similar. The great bulk of the German people encountered (fraternization by our soldiers is forbidden) have no idea that their country has done anything wrong in setting out to subjugate the Continent. They feel unhappy about losing the war, blame Hitler and the generals for their tactical mistakes and pin their hopes on better execution when the next war comes. After nearly six years of struggle they are happy, of course, to be out of the war at last.

A German sense of guilt and remorse, which was expected, appears to be largely lacking. This is disturbing enough, but it does not even occur to this defeated people that the attempt to dominate all Europe, including Soviet Russia, and at the same time hold off the United States, was in itself beyond a nation of seventy millions. Poor strategy is, then, the only cause of widespread German regret.

What goes into the making of so impervious a national state of mind? First of all a traditional subservience to government authority. (Note the supineness indicated in the "Letter from Germany" elsewhere in these pages or the German character diagnosis of F. W. Foerster.) A scrupulously obedient people has been subjected to a decade of relentless propaganda and pressure. Those Germans who had the heroism to resist or were considered as potential opposition leaders were eliminated through the concentration camp and/or death. And they were not a few. Foreign travel was cut to a minimum, foreign periodicals were banned and listening to foreign broadcasts became a political offense. The Government took over all the schools. The nazis came to be the German people's only source of information. So deadly became this control of all media of information that the only Germans today who appear to give any hint that they were not completely taken in are old people who sadly look back upon happier days and innocent youngsters not yet caught up in the nazi youth movement.

Post-Hitler Germany, then, presents anything but an encouraging prospect. The democratic leaders have long since been eliminated or left out of touch with their compatriots through years of exile; AMG has thus far been unable to find German democrats for civilian administration of captured German towns. All there is to build on is a mood of subservience, a ready compliance with orders backed by force. That is both a difficulty and an advantage for the occupying forces. It makes re-education of the Germans all but inevitable.

Re-education of a people as oversensitive yet as aggressive as the Germans calls for firmness as well as tact. The enormity of the crimes which they have perpetrated must be made abundantly clear to them, as must the rights of all peoples, the aims of the new world organization and their nation's rightful place in the postwar world. If the Germans were so effectively conditioned by pressure-propaganda coupled with Hitler's unbroken series of bloodless, initial successes, they can learn again from teaching along more democratic lines, instruction tactfully given but backed by unmistakable Allied military force. Gradually the Germans must be enabled again to contribute constructively to the common life of Europe. German re-education is at once a delicate and a momentous task.

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State of the Lawns

THE Air Force officer handed the French banknote to the bartender. There were two circular white spaces on the banknote but when the bartender held the note up to the light there appeared in the white spaces the head of a fine girl and the officer said that is the French Republic but the girls in North Africa, when they were not Arabs, were like girls anywhere, and the Navy on shore leave in North Africa was like the Navy on shore leave anywhere. Only, an officer is supposed to know, or try to know, which girls are which, so that when these gobs were asking a Frenchman why he had to have two girls with him and why couldn't they have one of them I asked them if they wanted me to run them in to the Shore Patrol and they said you can't do it and I said there are plenty of soldiers here who can do it and they said you're the Army and I said yes I'm the Army and get out of here before I run you in.

The Air Force Major said you see that banknote is overprinted. It is a good French hundred franc note but it says on it that it is worth a thousand francs; the Germans overprinted it when they brought it to North Africa. Well, what's it worth now Mr. McCaffery asked the Major. It's worth nothing now the Major said.

But that was in the late afternoon and the Major was in the village bar because of the thunder storm; there are always thunder storms in the Hudson valley; every afternoon; even when there are no storms anywhere else; the family had sent the Major into the village to bring back the dessert and when the rain came the Major had gone into the bar to talk to Mr. McCaffery.

And how is the beer in North Africa asked Mr. McCaffery?

The beer is no good in North Africa the Major said. And it is no good in Italy and no good in France, and in England it is still; they like it that way. In France it is in bottles like pop bottles and when you open them it blows all over everywhere but in England it is still. I didn't get to Ireland the Major said and everybody's in Germany and maybe I will be in Germany when my leave is over. Or in Japan.

Is there any beer in Japan Mr. McCaffery asked. I don't know, the Major said.

It was not that the lawns were green; the spring was early and some of the lawns were green or rather some parts of the lawns were green; there was fresh green grass growing; undoubtedly; but perhaps a lawn was never green until it was cut; never uniformly green; until it showed that it was being attended to. No matter what the grass was doing you could not call it a lawn; not yet.

Abroad, the Major had thought about the lawns at home. He had hoped very much that there would be gardeners to take care of the lawns. In England he had seen the lawns ploughed up but that had not been necessary in America. In the suburbs, perhaps; for victory gardens; but then one passed through the suburbs; they did not detain one. In the Hudson valley surely it had not been necessary to destroy the lawns and, no, it had not been necessary; they were there; but they were not green. The lawn was incomplete until the trees were in foliage. That perhaps was it. Along the river only the willows were in foliage; there were buds on all the trees but there were no green leaves on the other trees and in the woods only the willows were green. They looked fragile, impermanent. Spring was like that of course. You still could see the river through the woods and West Point across the river—a little earlier he had heard the sunset gun from the Parade Grounds; that was the war again; they fired a gun even when you were on leave—the trees in the woods stood each one separate; they were not bound together by the foliage; one looked up and saw the sky. There was no deep shade. The flowers, forsythia, skunk cabbage, arbutus, which were in bloom and, at the edge of the wood, a white magnolia tree, were there alone; they were not related to the woods. In the spring the trees and the flowers beneath the trees were still separate; later, one would be in the woods, closed in.

Later, when one came out of the woods, it would be to cross the pasture, and then perhaps someone would be sitting at the edge of the lawn; there would be the white and red striped parasol, the white painted iron chairs, the white iron table with the glass top; perhaps someone would be sitting there dressed in white, or there might be visitors, two or three ladies dressed in white, a gentleman in white flannels with a dark coat and a straw hat with a club ribbon, the younger people would be at the tennis court; they would come for the cake and lemonade and then there would be time for another set, and then one would hear them calling the score, one would hear the sprinkler revolving on the lawn, watch it turn, watch the spray rise, curve, fall. The dogs would be there sprawled out, asleep, and at the end of the lawn the iron dog would be looking out over the river, distracted, apparently, from the limp, dead, iron bird on the iron pedestal over which it stood eternal guard. It was the lawn, the state of the lawn, round which the life of the place centered, but probably rather in summer than in the spring. And, naturally in the past; in the past only. The white dresses in the photographs of the past; the lawn and everything else in the past.

This has been an early spring Mr. McCaffery said, it is almost summer. Presently it will be summer the Major said.

C. G. PAULDING.

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Maritain Leaves for Rome

Speeches at a luncheon held in his honor*

AFTER THE luncheon was over, Mr. Henri Bernstein turned toward Madame Maritain, who was seated at his left, and addressed to her the following words, as recorded by a stenographer:

"Madame, before celebrating as briefly as possible the event which brings us together, I would like to offer you, as well as Maritain, our best wishes for a happy journey and a fortunate mission. If you are both of you satisfied, all those who love our cause will have reason to be satisfied likewise. Maritain's labors will be heavy, but from time to time, at the end of long days of toil, the burning languor and emotion of the Roman scene will overcome cares of state, and you, as a pair of artists, will slip into a few hours of that meditation and forgetfulness the enchantment of which Chateaubriand hints at. Really you should write an account of this journey. You have, Madame, a great talent, which I have admired in that testimony of distress and loyalty, your 'Les Grandes Amitiés.' [Translated in English under the title 'We Have Been Friends Together.'] In this book you strike a note which quite naturally brought to my mind Madame Desbordes-Valmore and André Chénier. . . .

"I myself knew some of the people you there bring back to life, and I wish to pay tribute to your gift at portraiture—among many other gifts. Allow me the pleasure of reading to our friends a few lines from the beginning of your volume which especially moved me: 'In the present which is yet mine, I do not feel that I am present. I turn my thoughts toward the past and toward the future: toward the future hidden in God; toward the past which God made for us, and filled with so many sorrows and graces, toward our past life and toward our friends.'

"How wonderful—and how it tears our hearts!

"I have spoken of Chateaubriand . . . By chance a few weeks ago I picked up his reminiscences, 'Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe,' and leafed through his recollections of his Roman Embassy. A hopeless boredom gnawed at this exalted spirit . . . but boredom is not the ill with which you are threatened. Far too powerful forces will protect you against it, and above all the force of your love for each other. With you, Madame, go all our best wishes."

An American pays tribute

C. G. Paulding

MR. AMBASSADOR: You stood, in January, 1940, on the deck of a ship which was bringing you to this country and it takes a long time for a ship to cross the ocean but it is very surprising how swiftly a ship moves when it makes the turn at the end of the breakwater and the ship moves close and parallel to the quays of the city and then Marseilles is very close on the left of the ship but surprisingly soon the city is not close at all and there is only Notre Dame de la Garde on the hill and then there are only Cézanne's mountains back of Aix, the Mont Sainte Victoire, and then is it the coast of France, and then it is not the coast of France but only the horizon and only a line of clouds above the horizon and then, and then, Mr. Ambassador, you had left your country.

Those who were with you turned away from you so that you would be entirely alone when you stood there looking back at France and you knew that there was the Etang de Berre and to the left the ramparts of Aigues Mortes and then the Rhone and that would be Avignon and Lyons and then all the provinces, all the cities would be in your mind, and Paris, your city, and the house in Meudon, the dead Péguy, the dead Bloy, all the great friendships Madame Maritain has told about, and then *everything,* all at once, the living and the dead, every road, every village, the man walking between the trees along the road and entering the village, all the seasons, all the wars, all the revolutions, all the music, all the philosophy, the debate with Bergson, the music of Satie,

*Held March 15, 1945, by the French-American Club at New York's Waldorf-Astoria.

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all the painting, Rouault, Chagall, the poetry. Those who were with you turned away because you had to be alone at the moment in which you were leaving your country and there was no word anyone might speak to you while your country receded into the distance until it had disappeared entirely and was entirely in your heart. Then there was the sound of the wind in the ship's rigging, the wireless began to speak . . . it was colder than one had thought.

So then you found yourself in America, teaching. At Toronto, in Chicago, at Columbia, at Princeton, Yale, at Iowa, at St. John's Annapolis. And teaching also through the Humanism, the Wisdom and the Knowledge of your writing. (And it was a wonderful thing that there could still be students to teach anywhere in the world if only still for a brief time.) You had come to America to teach. That was the word. You were said to be teaching and it is true that you know a great many things other people do not know, that you are the master of a great and traditional discipline many people have forgotten, but what you were really doing, what you have been doing all your life, was to seek the truth, the religious truth, the political truth, the social truth, the truth of honor, the truth of beauty, a certain purity of truth, in every field of man's knowledge and aspirations and love. The truth of man's destiny. No matter how concealed it might be by poverty or ignorance or evil. Specially you sought it with outstanding gallantry wherever it was concealed by hatred or prejudice. Wherever men wished to keep it concealed.

★

When you came to America it was not someone who came from France with a valise and he opened it and showed us what was in it. It was someone who was with us, of us, working with us fraternally, with any of us who wanted to work seriously, with any artist if he were a serious artist not over-fascinated by his own cadences, with anyone of any race or creed. If he had some part of your own immense desire for truth and if he shared your conviction that truth, absolute truth, is the final goal toward which man tends.

That is the way things were. You were one of us, working with us. In the spring of 1940. And then what happened, happened. The terrible thing happened in France.

The terrible demand was made of France that she should consent to die. The terrible evidence was there in the face of the world and the world looked at France not knowing whether she was alive or dead or whether if alive she would not, in utter misery and exhaustion, consent to die.

The world was not left in uncertainty.

At once a French voice spoke from London to the world.

The French people could not speak, but their silence was a refusal of death as positive as any words. Silently they refused to die; silently they refused to purchase, so easily, yet in dishonor, a life which would be death—the death of freedom. Silently they entered a horror that was to last four years but they did not know that in four years it would end; they had no way of knowing that it would not last forever; silently they gave their consent that it might last indefinitely but no matter how long it lasted they were determined to endure any horror rather than be slaves. They were silent except when the hostages were allowed to write a letter, to speak, before they were shot. In France even those words were not the most important thing. For the French acted. We still cannot measure their full heroism. Or what it meant to our common cause.

We knew that if France were really to die then we would fight a military war in self defense—to save ourselves—but that if France were dead we would win the war—only, that would be all. You cannot restore a nation which has consented to die. You could not have restored freedom to Europe if France representing Europe had consented to do without freedom. We had to know what was France's determination. That is why throughout these years of France's trial there was a need for someone to speak to us in America.

In those bitter and unhappy days, Mr. Ambassador, no American turned away from you. Because you were here and we knew you. When you spoke we believed you. We wanted to know the truth; we knew that you would tell us the truth. It was not a question of your loving truth more than France or France more than truth. These objects were inseparable. We had to know the truth because if France had fallen—France never fell—our war would have lost all meaning and we would have been fighting and dying for a world which was dead. So that we turned to you—the German Americans, the Italian Americans and all the other kinds of Americans, and the Catholics, the Protestants and the Jews; the man who sold you the newspaper asked you what you thought, and we all asked you—you were tireless, you received us all—we asked you the truth about France for that truth was part of the indivisible truth of this war. We had to know what was that truth. You told the truth always, the truth as it was known to you, and in doing so you served France but you served America also, you served the world. We in America will always be immensely grateful to you.

France is free. France is risen.

But it is not all happiness, not yet. It is not like when all the Russians are in the Russian church in the rue Daru in Paris and it is the Russian Easter and they say He is risen. Indeed

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He is risen. And they kiss each other and there is this joy of Easter. From an indescribable depth of misery, suffering and heroism, France has risen—but only to the common level of our anxiety, our distress, the anxiety, the misery, the distress of all the world. She was in so deep an agony that we could not see her. She stands now free, at our side, close to us, close to our hearts—but it is in this desert that humanity has made of the world, in these ruins, that France and America stand together. No one of us now is stronger than anyone else. (Whatever hope there is is the hope of both France and America or else it is no one's.) We are free and victory is near, but one does not pass from war into the peace of before the war. France and America will pass from war into a world that only the closest devotion and comradeship can fill with any hope.

★

You are going now to Rome. As an American I shall graciously leave to the Government which is sending you there as its Ambassador the instructions as to what you are to say when you get there. You will be the French Ambassador to the Vatican and not the American Ambassador. You will serve your country with the devotion that you have always given her. But of course in serving your country you will also be serving my country, serving the peoples of all countries, everywhere, who stand now uncertain and hoping and dismayed, with the end of the war approaching, but with uncertainty approaching also and with misery, bereavement and hunger and ruin already their companions, their most familiar companions. For the work you will do, you have, and you will need great courage.

All your friends in America are sad that you are leaving us. They are going to applaud you now, Mr. Ambassador, and if this were not quite so much the Waldorf, someone would whistle and that in Paris would make M. Henri Bernstein, playwright, shudder, but you know Americans and you know that the whistling would only mean that they thought you were swell.

We wish that there were some gesture other than that of clapping our hands which would tell you that what we seek to give you is what strength we may, strength from this America which will hold you always in its heart.

A Frenchman pays tribute

Henri Bernstein

WITH ADMIRATION have we listened to the penetrating words, so beautifully wrought, of Gouverneur Paulding, an American citizen and a citizen of the world, and an active and faithful friend of France's destiny. My fellow citizens here gathered together thank him and wish to assure him of the great and considered love which they have for his own country, the United States.

Our small group reflects the majority of Frenchmen who remained in France, and our two countries remain intimately linked together. We need only in this connection reflect upon those most cordial and straightforward sentences which President Roosevelt recently used in greeting a group of Parisian journalists and upon the joy aroused in France by this evidence of friendship.

In both countries a handful of critics and of men of ill-will seek to disturb our happy relationship—and that for reasons which it is difficult for a reasonable man to understand. Yet their effort is in vain, for traditional relationships of affection and of broad common interest push both America and France together, and nothing will be able to wound what I dare call the inevitability of unity between these great nations.

We are today gathered together around Jacques Maritain in order to celebrate a brilliant victory of the ideas of liberty and equality, of human dignity, of government of the people by the people—and of resistance against that evil which we have discovered to be the most terrible of all evils, the seizure and exercise of power by totalitarian régimes, under which men's bodies are handed over to the torturer, thrown into the charnel house, and, what is worse, men's souls are bent, blunted, torn apart. For every democrat, be he or be he not a religious man, Maritain's name has a clarion quality, like some password in the army which brings a sentry to salute and opens the way for one's passage to the citadel. Our friend has just been named by the French Government—by the government of the first of Catholic countries—Ambassador to the Holy See.

Here is a piece of news of the utmost importance. And if one reflects upon the decisive stands which we find taken in most of Maritain's writings and sayings, it is surprising news. Among many examples I will refer only to one. Jacques Maritain is that soldier of Catholicism who, at the height of the Spanish Civil War, rejected all collaboration with the fascism of the Falange, refusing to yield to the lies of those who went about saying that the only alternative thereto was communism. Against this diabolical dilemma propagated by Hitler our friend stood firm: in this, as

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in other things, as in all things, he would obey only that divine reason which has dedicated his soul to liberty, to democracy.

Everyone will grant that it required great moral courage—and moral courage is more rare and often more exacting than physical courage—to take such a position: to disappoint friends and zealots, to incur the disapproval and irritation of certain Church dignitaries, to brave the wrath and the reprisals of publicists, of controversialists who themselves invoked their Catholicism and who, up to that point, had supported Maritain, or in any case had not attacked him. However little you may have been involved in public life, you must acknowledge that such a decision can only come from a stout heart.

The new Ambassador is not lacking in courage. His graceful form, his head a little inclined to one side, as though constantly in meditation, and his expression of friendly warmth mysteriously convey to us a feeling of strength. His very presence transmits the impression that he will gladly undertake every appeal to his courtesy and warmth of heart; that he breathes an atmosphere of great goodness, of natural love of his neighbor, but that it would be impossible for him to come to terms with error or evil, to yield one iota to the law of his own reason and of his inner life, and that in defense of his thought he will become the boldest of warriors.

From the appointment of Maritain and the acceptance of that appointment by the greatest established spiritual power on earth, we might draw extremely interesting conclusions upon the future of France, of Catholicism and even of the world. But this is not the time or place for a political discussion. May I merely indicate that aspect of a new and unexpected situation by which I have been most vividly struck?

An American and a talented critic has written: "It has not been hard to recognize Jacques Maritain as one of those watch-dogs of humanity taking his own principles in deadly earnest, and alertly catching the tide of the battle of ideas while other men slept on."

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And such is the man—a believer, in whom Christianity and freedom are interwoven—such is the democrat—strong to the end because he has not adhered to his cause by means of an opinion based on a thousand scattered feelings, but by means of his faith itself—that General de Gaulle has appointed to Rome, to represent the aspirations of a new France before the Holy Father.

Here is a significant answer by the head of the Provisional Government of the Republic to those everlastingly worried men whom the forthrightness and the skill of his activity have not succeeded in reassuring, an answer also to those supporters of Vichy not yet cleansed of their stupid error, who hastily clothe themselves in a radical advocacy of de Gaulle, and now accuse the General of betraying his own principles, and even succeed in inserting in great American newspapers the notion that de Gaulle is nothing more than a new Pétain.

That is false and absurd. A statesman has not only the right but the duty to be a politician, that is to say, to select for reforms and basic changes an hour fitting the needs of the nation. Can we require President de Gaulle by some conjurer's trick at once to carry out the whole reconstruction of France, while his country is surrounded with difficult diplomatic problems and in the midst of the infernal tumult of European war? While France is a ravaged land without means of communication, without adequate food supplies, without heat, without electricity, stripped of two and a half million of her sons held captive?

Reflect, friends, on four and a half years of our national anguish. Did General de Gaulle emerge the victor on every occasion over difficulties and embarrassments, over situations described as desperate—or did he not? Did he keep the promises he made to the French people—or did he not? Today he remains faithful to our hopes by raising Jacques Maritain and Henri Bonnet to the rank at which we see them, and by conferring posts of essential importance to our diplomacy upon these tried and true liberals, who never fixed themselves up with any loopholes for retreat or paths to asylum. Now and always Charles de Gaulle is for us the man who was faithful to himself and faithful to us also.

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I should have liked to speak briefly about Jacques Maritain as a writer and an artist. Time will scarcely permit me to do so. But this much I must say. His prose, charged with poetry, in its contrasts resembles those poems of Baudelaire wherein muffled, almost strangled lines are wilfully alternated with lines of the utmost sharpness, which, in their sober setting, sparkle with sorcery. In Maritain's prose the turn of expression has so much natural charm that even an uninstructed reader can haltingly follow his thought through his philosophic works, relying for support upon these almost sly beauties, which suddenly shine forth as you go from page to page, from paragraph to paragraph. . . .

Yet if here I am to name any one of his books, I choose "A travers le Désastre" [translated under the title "France, My Country"] as a bit of history superb in its feeling of desolation, as the summation of vivid political thought and as the worthy and restrained testimony of a patriot's sufferings.

It is time now for me to yield the floor to his

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Excellency. This is a title due you, Maritain, for the conjoint excellencies of your mind and of your style, for the excellence of your knowledge, for the excellence of the example you set us and of your courage and—allow me to say it—for the excellence of your heart, attested by the friendships, the tenderness, the deep devotion in the midst of which you live.

Of America and of the future

Jacques Maritain

AT THE very outset I should like to thank Henri Bernstein for the good wishes he has addressed with such delicacy to my wife, an expression of his friendship to which both she and I are deeply sensitive, and I thank him also for his friendly words concerning myself. I am far from deserving them, but that is why I feel even more moved by the friendship which inspired them and which gave them so penetrating and eloquent an accent. May the wish he formed for us be fulfilled—it corresponds so entirely to our own—may we find, indeed, in Rome some slight time for meditation.

But above all I wish to congratulate him for the task which he has pursued throughout the years of exile, for the untiring devotion with which he has given his full effort in order to make known in this country the true likeness of France, in order to promote friendship between France and America.

And thank you, Paulding, for all you have said. It has deeply touched me. As you have just recalled in terms of so sober an emotion, we were together when we left the shores of France, we came together to the United States on the same ship, in January, 1940; it was to travel with you that we chose that ship—which had a memorably melodious name, the *Exochorda*. For we had so many common friends in France! Rapidly you became for me, you and those who are dear to you, that treasure of friendship in which the exile's heart tenderly places its confidence and in which it finds great consolation. I wish to tell you my happiness at having been able to work a little with you at the task in which you are engaged here, on THE COMMONWEAL, which I had known for many years, which called you back to New York, and the influence of which on the public opinion of this country, whether upon those who are here called "liberal" Catholics, or upon those "liberals" who are very slightly Catholic or not Catholic in the least, is becoming more and more important. It was at a similar task that you worked in Rome and in France, with our comrades on *Esprit,* and one of the things that I admire in you is that you have been able to remain so authentically American while at the same time you are so authentically French. That is one of the miracles of the heart. You know France from the inside, from the inner sources of her life, and it is for this reason that what you do for mutual understanding between our two countries is so effective and awakens in your French friends such affectionate gratitude.

I thank the President of the French-American Club, Henri Bernstein, for having thought of organizing this meeting and for having done it with so delicate a care. In spite of my desire to avoid banquets—I am about to represent a country whose people are hungry in a country whose people are starving—and although I had refused, for which I beg them to excuse me, a similar suggestion of a banquet made by some friends who today are among us here, this time I could only yield and accept. And after all, I am happy to have this opportunity to express my gratitude to my French and American friends; to all those French in exile who never despaired of the people of France and who kept in communion with them; and to all those Americans whose generous and noble affection we have known throughout the last five years, among whom we have such dear friends and with whom we have formed bonds of understanding which distance will not sever. My thanks to the French-American Club which has worked for its part with so great a faithfulness to broaden and deepen Franco-American friendship while serving the cause of Free France and the ideal of grandeur and freedom represented by General de Gaulle.

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It is not officially but as a private citizen that I am speaking today, to a group of friends. And it is true also that a philosopher remains always a philosopher, even when charges which honor him and which he has never sought have been imposed on him. It seems to me that having the honor of representing at the seat of the highest spiritual authority an earthly fatherland whose history and vocation are so profoundly imbued with spirituality—having the honor of representing at the Holy See not only French Catholicism, but France, all of France, with her Catholics and her non-Catholics, and the temporal task which remains for her to accomplish, and her temporal welfare which it is her duty to promote here on earth—it seems to me that I shall have there in

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the shadow of the Chair of Peter some opportunity to pursue, in thought as in action, the philosophical study of those problems and relationships between the spiritual and the temporal which has been my task for many long years. And where the question is, as it is always wherever philosophical wisdom is at work: *distinguer pour unir.*

No doubt many months will pass before I may have again the opportunity of speaking in New York. In what I say now, in these words which are not of farewell but only of *au revoir,* I should like to express my gratitude to this country and my affection. I have loved the United States from the very first time I came here, more than twelve years ago, and since then I have found myself increasingly bound to America by ties which are closest to the heart, the tie of gratitude, the tie of friendship. It is with great melancholy that we leave it now in order to accomplish other duties—hoping, once my mission is at an end, that we shall be able to return from France at regular intervals.

We shall always remember the welcome we received in New York in the dark days of 1940; and the instances and testimony of sympathy lavishly given here by the man in the street to French people stunned by their country's misfortune. We shall always remember that tenderness for France, that confidence in the people of France, which the American people never ceased to show throughout the past four years. We shall remember the reception given to General de Gaulle by the people of New York and the emotion and the enthusiasm they manifested when the news came that Paris had been freed.

Since the landing on the coast of Normandy, once more there are American cemeteries in France, and mothers here mourning their sons fallen for a common victory and for the liberation of our country. One of them who was for us a great friend died of grief. That also we shall not forget.

And, shall I add, spiritual bonds of a very particular nature hold us to this country in the persons of some men and of some women who asked us to help them at the time of their coming into the Church, and from whom our hearts will never be separated? And shall I mention the gratitude we feel, my wife and I, for the welcome which our books have found in America and for the intelligent understanding shown to us in so many generous letters?

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There are many things that I admire in this country: and first of all the deep awareness America has of human freedom, of the dignity of the common man, and of communion with the people. I shall not tire you attempting to present my analysis of American life; for that, a book more voluminous than de Tocqueville's would be needed, or than my friend John Nef's fine "The United States and Civilization." I should only like to say what a great experience it has been for me to teach here. First of all at the Institute of Medieval Studies in Toronto, and then in the American universities which received me so generously: at Columbia, at Princeton, at the University of Chicago, at Notre Dame, at Yale, where, in giving the Terry Lectures, I prepared my book on education, at the New School for Social Research, where the Ecole Libre des Hautes Etudes was founded through the generous cooperation of my dear friend, Dr. Alvin Johnson.

I should also like to say in what high esteem I hold American youth and what sympathy I feel for it, for those students whose thirst for knowledge I have been able in a fashion to measure, and whose spiritual aspirations—which only too often a superficial glance does not reveal—I have known. This country is not a materialistic country even though there are some Americans too willing to call it one; with great courage it is breaking a difficult path, along which man's freedom shall unburden modern civilization—with its tendency toward technocracy and the dominance of money—of that materialism which weighs so heavily upon the human person. It seems to me that one is inevitably mistaken if one entertains a static conception of America, and if one does not understand that America is constantly creating herself in the midst of an unceasing conflict of contrasting forces and thanks to a dynamism which is always animated by the spirit of her great pioneers, her great radicals and the fathers of her Constitution. In the intellectual order, I think that few debates today have as great importance as have those which are taking place in this country on the subject of education and the liberal arts, and in connection with the plans for educational reform proposed by Mr. Robert Hutchins, the President of the University of Chicago. In the social order, I believe that great things, which will renew democratic life and enable each citizen to be conscious of his freedom, his dignity as a man, actively engaged in a common task, are to be expected from the deep forces working in the American people, and from the initiatives taken by men who have confidence in the American people. I am thinking, for instance, of the school for young workers founded by Chicago's Auxiliary Bishop Bernard Sheil, and also of the Back-of-the-Yards movement, and of the Industrial Areas Foundation of which Saul Alinsky is the moving spirit.

In general one may say that the values of loving-kindness and of good will are esteemed here more highly than they are in any other country. There is a great deal of kindliness in this country, and kindliness holds a very high place here in the

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scale of moral values. I do not know if Americans themselves are always very conscious of this distinctive trait of their culture; may they always hold to it as to a treasure of immense value. I suppose that at the deepest source of this sentiment there is the memory, carried down through the generations, of the persecution and the wounds suffered by forebears before they left the Old World—and here is one of those wounds of divine origin which individuals and peoples doubtless need in order to be truly human—and also there lies the plan and purpose deeply rooted in this American people to create a new world founded upon the free consent of the will, for free men, in the sight of God.

The problem which now will arise, it seems to me, for the collective conscience of this great country, will be to found upon unshakeable intellectual certainties, to justify in a rational manner, this immense impulse of confidence in the creative energies of man, in kindliness, in freedom—this democratic faith, and this aspiration toward a completely human civilization. It is with this confidence that the American people are fighting now in the whole world, yet it would run the risk tomorrow of being vulnerable were it founded only upon an inheritance, even a sacred inheritance, of habitual feelings and tendencies.

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In connection with these remarks of a general nature, it is proper to call attention to a special problem, among all the great moral problems which the world faces today. I am alluding to this fact that from the point of view of moral and psychological experience there is a profound difference today separating the old and the new continents. Briefly it is this: Europe did not believe in the Devil: for four years Europe has seen the Devil. Here people do not believe in the Devil, and they have not seen his face, they hardly believe in the reality of evil. This sort of cleavage in humanity's moral experience is a sheer fact which must be admitted. To repair it a great effort of reason will be needed.

I presume, moreover, that moral epidemics follow the same laws of propagation as do physical epidemics. It is possible that in a few years this country may have to defend itself against the spiritual wave of destruction of human values which for a time submerged Europe, and which may reach this shore of the Atlantic under forms at this moment unforeseeable, as also under forms already known and active, such, for instance, as anti-Semitic propaganda. I am convinced that this country will resist this trial that may come, and will triumph, should it come. America will have been triumphant in this war; she has, to protect herself, her living traditions of freedom and morality, her effective democracy, her people. For the great and admirable strength of America is that America truly is the American people. Yet if the trial of which I speak were to come to this nation, she then would see undisguised before her the face of evil and evil's reality. Against such a spiritual attack it is spiritually that one must be prepared, and that is one of the reasons why I believe that the intellectual and moral work which is being accomplished at this moment in the spirit of the American people, together with the effort of reflection which it will have to make in order to understand Europe, are of capital importance for America's future and for the future of the world.

For this country, as for the other countries which are struggling now for the world's freedom, the equipment which tomorrow will be above all necessary will be that of the arms of the spirit, the great intellectual and moral certainties of which man's heart is only definitely assured through the twofold and conjoint light of the Gospel and of reason. You will not be surprised, since I am a philosopher, that as I take leave of my American friends I hail the renewal of the philosophy of man and of life, a renewal of which I see many signs in this country, and I hail the work of reflection, of faith and of spirituality which is taking place in many minds, in this American youth which is so generously and so valiantly exposing its life on the battlefields in Europe and in the lands of the Pacific and on the two oceans.

In the years to come, the peoples of the world will dedicate themselves to a task great among all tasks, that of building up an international structure truly capable of insuring peace. Problems of organization and of international technique will be in the forefront. Yet, even in this connection, there is something deeper which concerns the common conscience, and the conscience of each one of us, and to this it is necessary to call attention. What I mean is that an inner renewal of conscience is necessary above all; that any technique of international organization, no matter how just and how wise it may be in itself, is destined to fail, if at the same time the peoples do not understand this very simple truth, which is that states do not exist for themselves, but for the civilized community of which they are members. In other words, there is a common good in civilized society which reverts to all the parts of this great organism and by reason of which each member is vitally interested in the welfare of all other members and must desire their welfare.

That is a very simple truth. Yet it is true also that we are still very far from giving it any realization in our psychological behavior. In general, it is commonly observable that most often each one of us really thinks only about the welfare of his own country, and shows for the interior welfare of other countries a sort of moral indifference

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which spares us all expenditure of emotion. Or if the fate of other countries interests us, it is only to the measure that such a fate affects, in one way or another, the welfare of our own country. But if truly this world is one, and if the moral behavior of each one of us must be adapted to this unity of the world, it is something different which is asked of us. While desiring and loving more intensely, of course, the welfare of our own people and of our own country, it is required of us that we should love and desire also the welfare of other peoples and of other countries. And I say that we must desire and love this welfare in itself, and for the welfare of the civilized community. There will truly be a society of nations only when the citizens of one country feel themselves affected—I do not say, of course, in the same degree, but in the same manner, although at a lesser degree of intensity—by the effort of other countries toward the accomplishment of their task here on earth—and toward human progress in general—as they are by the effort of their own country toward the same goals. May I add that in virtue of the cousinship existing between the historical vocations of France and of America, and the problems they both have to solve, it will be particularly natural and easy, when the truth of this relationship is deeply understood, for a Frenchman to feel, because of this understanding, real interest in the things of America and for an American, for the same reason, to take interest in the things of France.

I repeat, finally, something that I have said very often: that the natural friendship which unites the American people with the French people and the similarity of their historical missions and of the consciousness that they both have that they are laboring not only for their own national interests, but for man and for man's destiny here on earth, form one of the essential foundations for the reconstruction of the world and for the rebirth of civilization.

There remains for me only to renew our thanks to our American friends and to our French friends and to say with all my heart: *Vive la France! Vive l'Amérique! Vive l'amitié franco-Américaine!*

Letter from Germany

The following is a letter written from Germany without any intent of publication by an American service man whose duties require extensive contact with civilian populations.

SOME TIME ago, I had a few days in a large Belgian town. I began to talk to someone in a *bistro,* and met a bunch of resistance people with whom I stayed for several days and nights. One of them, a young Russian medical student, was caught by the German invasion in Liège, but since at that time Russia and Germany were at peace he was left alone. He offered himself as a doctor during the occupation, drew a car and gasoline from the Kommandantur, and used both for resistance work.

But here is the story: He and I went to Mass together, and he gave me a long, well fingered rosary. "You may keep that as a souvenir. It belonged to a priest friend of mine. I took it off his body!" His body? "Yes, I was walking down a road and he came along and mistook me for a farmer. He stopped me and asked my permission to stay overnight on my farm. He had run away from the Germans. I took him to our camp—somewhere in the Vosges. He stayed there, saying Mass every morning, and doing some cooking during the day time, while we went out on our missions. One day the Germans found the camp, killed him and two others. When I came back at night they almost caught me too. Some days later I came back and took his papers from his body, and this rosary. I never could locate his family." What kind of missions were those on which you went? "All depended on the orders we received. That particular day, I went out to shoot the mayor of a town who worked for the Germans. I went to his house. He was alone downstairs. I took out my pistol—the big Russian pistol—and aimed at him, but the pistol jammed. He was paralyzed with fear, but he cried for help, and his wife came down the stairs, shooting at me from a small revolver. She trembled so much that she missed me. She came toward me, shooting and missing me four times, and when she was near enough, I grasped her wrist, took the revolver, shot her husband and then left and went back."

This Russian is medium height, with a fine face and a magnificent forehead which is crowned by two bumps big as horns. He has soft grey eyes, and a strong, sensitive mouth. He calls himself a communist, but a Catholic first—and he is scrupulously honest in his arguments, in every bit of his discussion. At this time, he is employed by the Allies, and I could look at his record: He is credited with over forty "executions" of the kind described above, plus a dozen minor ones. At one time the price on his head amounted to half a million Belgian francs, about $11,000. He is a practicing Catholic, and has daily Communion if possible. And, he is fifty times over an assassin.

The rosary burnt in my pocket; it certainly is a reminder of the problem of justified killing which each soldier has to face; I am grateful that I have to think it out, not act it out. I did not feel very much assurance concerning his answer to it.

Not until now. I am in Germany now.

The other day, in a post office which used to be a school house, I spoke for a long time to the

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most attractive daughter of the former school principal. She had spent almost four years in Cologne, and assured me that the "terror attacks" (she said this without a trace of conscious criticism, to give the thing its name, as one calls a pin a pin) were terrible beyond description.

"And you—what do you think of that sort of warfare?" she asked me. I have visited Aachen, and have an idea what things might have been like, terrible indeed, but I told her the truth: We came through England, and I saw London, Manchester, Coventry (what's left) and Liverpool. Then we came through Normandy, and again through Alsace, Belgium and Holland. Not a single cow in Holland. Dirty, hungry, befuddled women and children in the subways, or amid the rubble of a village—old men pushing heavy carts; ladies in fur coats bending down for a cigarette stub; and above all, ruins, ruins, ruins—all that does not register any more. Arriving in Germany we are used to seeing that kind of world, we expect to see it, and we find it. And the girl said this: "I suppose you are right; I suppose when the accounts are balanced Germany will owe more than the others. But, you see, we have done bad things. The Jews alone, bad things. Each of us has been guilty, in a little matter here and there. I know. Now, you come and present us with the bill for seventy million little wrongs which add up to something terrible. Only, no one of us owes the whole bill! and each of us has lost so much, that we are thinking each of us paid his share."

I spoke with many, all good Catholics, all anti-Hitler as they say, but they also say they could not have resisted. Gentle, warm, simple, harmless people. "But there was nothing we could do—the party was too strong, any man might be a nazi agent." So they had to swallow their convictions for the sake of staying alive—while my disquieting Russian had gambled his life for five years, minute after minute, for the sake of his convictions. I begin to cherish the rosary; my Russian friend the assassin certainly was closer to martyrdom than my harmless, warm- and simple-hearted neighbors of the moment.

We took for quarters the house relinquished by a nazi, a one-legged butcher, right in the midst of the thickly inhabited block. All houses have still the little white flags of surrender on them, so that this empty house stood out like a stubborn non-comformist. Our new neighbor slipped in through the basement window and let us in. He forced a door to the bedroom for us with the words: "A soft bed for the soldiers is half the victory." Meantime, he slipped in a few more times through the basement to help himself to coal and potatoes. Too friendly with us to be honest. He worries about the bedroom curtains he lost in the war—the others worry mostly about what they have understood has been decided in Yalta: mass deportation. They have also been told about mass castration, but were not impressed.

Down the street is the displaced persons center. French, Belgian, Dutch, Polish, Russian, Italian workers and PWs are living in the house, men and women, waiting for evacuation. A curly-haired Auvergnat in the doorway smiled at me, and I said: "Just liberated, eh?" He said: *"Des Allemands, seulement!"* ("Of the Germans, only!") He looks well-fed, better than the men in France.

A French officer whom I know told me that he arrested a PW jailer and brought him to his own jail. A Russian PW saw him, and fell on his knees, raised his hands in prayer, while thick tears were rolling down his cheeks: "Oh Mr. Officer—just give me one little shot from your pistol, please, please, to kill this jailer!" A French PW said he had never had a better boss than the German for whom he worked. And so on, and so on.

Forgive the *pêle-mêle;* I cannot think straight these days, they are too full of impressions. But I thought some of the salad above might interest or amuse.

Communications

PHILOSOPHY OF AMERICAN HISTORY

Astoria, N. Y.

TO the Editors: A reviewer, too, possesses certain inalienable rights which an author is bound to respect. Therefore I take no exception to his judgment of my work, "The Philosophy of American History." After all, it is a large work of 1,800 pages. Its theoretical basis, my Historical Field Theory, is a new departure from the accepted mold. The premises on which I build the new science of history are now undergoing the searching scrutiny of responsible scholarship in many seats of learning, as well as among interested individuals throughout the country.

Criticism of earnest students I welcome—for that is the leaven of cultural advancement in every field of endeavor. But what shall be said of criticism where a sentence is torn out of context and a meaning is inferred the very direct opposite of the impression which the quoted sentence is intended to convey?

Paul Kiniery quotes me as follows: "It is but fair to remind ourselves that wherever the Catholics had the upper hand, as in New Spain and New France, they reciprocated in fullest measure their vent of primordial human bestiality through the medium of an exalted religious piety."

Actually that sentence comes at the end of a long paragraph wherein I condemned in the strongest manner the persecution to which Catholics were subjected by the Protestant majority in the colony of Maryland. In the preceding three pages I emphasized the irony of history where a colony founded as a haven for Catholics by the noble-minded Lord Baltimore should become the scene

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of the most despicable outrages against the communicants of the Church.

Such outbursts of revolting savagery on religious grounds were nothing new to the times—the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries. How little the fundamental elements of our nature have changed during the intervening centuries the record of the past dozen years bears melancholy testimony.

To ascribe anti-Catholic sentiments to me is ridiculous both as a man, and surely as an historian. None is more fervent than I in praise of the "New World Jesuits, those heroic black-garbed strangers who feared neither death nor torture, and willingly embraced both for the glory of their Lord. They could not but arouse within the breasts of their savage listeners the profoundest emotions of awe and admiration. Many of them indeed suffered tortures which mercifully were spared Him for Whose sake they embraced their doom. Their unflinching fidelity to duty was their best protection against continued persecution. In time, fear changed to friendship and that to admiration, and finally through love to devotion. France's noblest contribution to the New World was the undying glory of its missionaries."

The above quotation is from Volume II, p. 77, of my "Philosophy of American History." MORRIS ZUCKER.

IN DEFENSE OF THE STUDY OF LATIN

San Francisco, Calif.

TO the Editors: At a time when, because of the exigencies of war, liberal education and the humanities are everywhere being cold-shouldered, it seems to me important that the generation to follow the war should be able to secure a solid foundation in that keystone of the humanities, the language of the ancient Romans.

I am no hidebound classicist. Command over our own English speech, mastery of its complexities, ease in its employment, are not merely desirable, but necessary. And what is this rich, idiosyncratic tongue of ours—ours by tradition even when not by heredity? On a substratum of primitive Teutonic speech has been grafted a language, then in its formative stage, which was directly derived from the Latin: and on this compound, in later centuries, has been fixed a further layer of conscious Latin derivatives. Thanks to William and his Normans; thanks to Geoffrey Chaucer, who established as our norm the compound of Norman French and Juto-Anglo-Saxon spoken as a Midland dialect; thanks to the Elizabethans and to the Augustans of the Age of Anne, the language we call English is two thirds a Latin tongue. Structurally it is (though inflectionally in a state of decay) akin to the Teutonic languages; but in actual word-substance, it is as Latin as French, almost as Latin as Italian.

If this seems an extravagant statement, translate any non-technical English paragraph, first into French, then into German; and see in which case the words from and into which the translation is made are philologically related. Or take a sentence at random from any serious but popular book, not in dialect or slang, and analyze it. I reach for the nearest novel, and find this sentence which incidentally also points the moral of my sermon:

"The scientific textbooks he had already read were peppered with Latin phrases whose meaning he had been compelled to divine, and the formal eighteenth century English on which he had been nurtured was so full of words with Latin roots that when once he had grasped the trick of inflections and inverted constructions, the dead language came miraculously to life." ("Dr. Bradley Remembers" by F. Brett Young.)

Excluding repetitions, there are forty-six words here. How many of them come directly from the Latin, or are taken from languages which were originally merely debased dialectical variants of Latin?—"scientific," "text-[books]," "Latin," "compelled," "divine," "formal," "century," "nurtured," "inflections," "inverted," "constructions," "language," "miraculously": thirteen (besides "phrases," which is Greek). Without them the sentence would be unintelligible; they are its key-words.

Can anyone deny that the enjoyment of reading (unless that reading be confined exclusively to contemporary books written entirely in so-called American English—if any such there be) would be multiplied many times by a familiarity with the origin, the exact or altered meanings, of these common words? Or that this most precious of all mental pleasures is enormously enriched by ability to comprehend those sly allusions, those delicate twists of expression, that atmosphere of freshly minted idiom, which are the bounty of masters of writing?

Even spelling, that ill-trained handmaid, can learn its trade only from the Latin teacher. No one whose Latin grammar was ingrained in him in his plastic years can ever make mistakes between "ible" and "able" or misspell "rarity" and "rarefy."

The old theory was that Latin—and Greek as well—were good for the child, just as mathematics was, because they "disciplined" him. The result was unfair both to the child and to the instrument of discipline. There are many minds, quite normal and even superior, which have no capacity for linguistics or for mathematics—though more often than we acknowledge, the culprit is bad and unimaginative teaching. We have learned that life will discipline the child soon and harshly enough, and that forcing extraneous discipline on him is like forcing the inhabitant of a country occupied by the nazis to *heil* Hitler—you can make him do it, but you can't make him like it. The consequence is that young people will tell you they had "had Latin" as they would say they had "had measles"—something unpleasant that they are well over and out of.

They do not even think of Latin—that great language which once overspread the civilized world, the exact equivalent of the position of the English language today—as ever having been an actual, living tongue; they would laugh if you reminded them that Romans scolded their children or made love to their sweethearts in ablative absolutes, chaffered for bargains or wept their hearts out in sentences full of gerundives. They have heard, but have never truly realized, that all through the Middle Ages Latin was the universal *lingua franca,* the Esperanto, the pigeon-English if you will, in which educated men of many nations could communicate freely. Erasmus, for

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example, never spoke any modern language but Dutch; yet he counted every scholar, every leader of thought, of his period among his acquaintance. Today the very nearest we can come to that is the holding of international conferences in two languages, French and English; and even so there will be some delegates at an uncomfortable disadvantage.

Latin is not our mother-tongue, true. But it is our stepmother-tongue and our mother-in-law tongue. It is a constituent part of our heritage, and we are unjust to our children when we leave them in ignorance of it. If culture is to be more than an arid and barren vocational training, then, for us who speak and read and write English, it must be built on a firm base of that lofty, lucid language bequeathed us by the Romans—as solid as their roads, as dignified as their arches, "more lasting than bronze," in Horace's nobly boastful phrase.

They are well aware of this in England, even in time of war; they are aware of it in every country of Western Europe, even where there is but the slightest cousinly bond between the native language and the Latin they study. It is only in hurried America, so intent on the present and the future it has forgotten the past, that college graduates deplore the stiff condition of *three years* of preparatory Latin! I should like to see children taught Latin as their second tongue from the time they begin to read and write their first. I think the end-result would be a surprisingly good foundation for a later scientific, sociological, and cultural education.

"Education" is itself a Latin word: we could do worse than to make it a Latin actuality as well.

MIRIAM ALLEN DE FORD.

ENGLISH IN THE LITURGY

Milwaukee, Wisc.

TO the Editors: There may be some interest in an historical addendum to Father Reinhold's recent article (March 16, 1945) on the use of the vernacular in the liturgy. The matter was at least mentioned prior to the establishment of the hierarchy in the United States and by no less a person than John Carroll, later the first Archbishop of Baltimore. In 1787, while he was yet Prefect-Apostolic, Carroll wrote a personal letter to Father Joseph Berington, an English priest, commending him for the stand on toleration and church government taken in his book, "The State and Behaviour of English Catholics from the Reformation to the Year 1780." This, as Monsignor Guilday remarks in his biography of Carroll, was a display of independence, for Berington's book aroused bitter controversy in England and the author himself was deprived of his sacerdotal faculties. But that is another matter. In writing to Berington, Carroll discussed the problem of "the use of the Latin tongue in the publick Liturgy":

> With respect to the latter point, I cannot help thinking that the alteration of the Church discipline ought not only to be solicited, but insisted upon as essential to the service of God and the benefit of mankind. Can there be anything more preposterous than an unknown tongue; and in this country either for want of books or inability to read, the great part of our congregations must be utterly ignorant of the meaning and sense of the publick office of the Church. (Peter Guilday, "The Life and Times of John Carroll.")

Later Carroll wrote about the Berington case to Father Arthur O'Leary, famed Irish Capuchin preacher and author of a widely-circulated book on toleration, and repeated his reason for urging the use of the vernacular:

> . . . I do indeed conceive that one of the most popular prejudices against us is that our public prayers are unintelligible to our hearers. Many of the poor people, and the negroes generally, not being able to read, have no technical help to confine their attitude. (Ibid.)

There was apparently no attempt to press the issue, in spite of the rather vigorous language used in the letters cited. After his consecration Carroll seems to have made no further reference to the matter, having either modified his opinions or felt constrained by the necessity of prudent caution.

C. J. NUESSE.

MICKIEWICZ'S BURIAL PLACE

Milwaukee, Wisc.

TO the Editors: "Mickiewicz's body was entombed among the dead kings of Poland in the cathedral in Cracow that is (or was: if it still exists, I know not) the national shrine of the Polish people," writes Michael Williams in his sympathetic note on Poland's greatest poet in the March 16 issue of THE COMMONWEAL.

Since other readers may likewise be interested in the fate of the Wawel Cathedral, Poland's Pantheon and Westminster Abbey combined, they may be relieved to learn that the Wawel Cathedral itself, according to a Polish Telegraph Agency dispatch of February 8, quoting Soviet sources, was damaged only slightly. The Germans mined the Castle on the Wawel hill but left in too great a hurry to carry out their intention.

All the statues in Cracow, however, including those of Mickiewicz, Kościuszko, and the late Ignace Paderewski's magnificent gift to the Polish people in 1910—the striking monument commemorating the Poles' victory over the Germans in 1410 at Grünwald—were destroyed as part of the systematic nazi policy to break the spirit and the morale of the martyred Polish people.

Moreover, the famous medieval altar by Wit Stwosz in St. Mary's Church, many art objects from the Cracow museums, and machines from the factories were removed into the Reich by the Herrenvolk in the course of their five-and-a-half-year occupation of Poland.

SZYMON ST. DEPTULA.

The Stage & Screen

The Barretts of Wimpole Street

MISS CORNELL'S revival of the memorable Besier piece, having traveled the European War Theater from first to last, is once again adjusted to Broadway, and I think, happily. The lady herself is perhaps lovelier than ever, and her extreme skill in dominating the scene

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from the couch of the fading Victorian poetess is still prodigious. This is, technically, an affair of gesture and silences, but more essentially, of spirit and understanding; and I only wish I might have watched the multiple soldiers on the various fronts confronted with a portrait of such delicacy. For this piece, inherently melodramatic, is so by virtue of history as well as theater, and its working out depends as much upon a kind of customary quietness as upon astounding climax. Halfway through the first scene, one finds one has received intimations not only of personality and conflict, but also, somehow, of the motions, small alarms, even weathers of the London of the time. It is a scene where figures pass, are grouped, are solitary; where books are riffled and left lying; where curtains are drawn at a certain hour, the scented handkerchief removed from a certain drawer; where the *habitual* first grounds then opposes the *play*. It is ridiculous to contrast a period piece devoted to the especial "courtship" of two buried poets to the self-conscious studies in naturalism at present in work on the Street: the thing is distilled, an exercise in nostalgia. But if it is passed, it is not dead; and in its presentation of days before drama, it is a lesson as well as an experience on our stage.

I am unable to share the apprehension of my colleagues concerning Brian Aherne's "Browning." His playing projected, it seemed to me, the right amount of ordered vigor and I cannot imagine the job more attractively done. Brenda Forbes is again exact as the steadfast "Wilson," and I thought Emily Lawrence's "Henrietta" the best of the three I have seen. Now and again, McKay Morris's elder "Barrett" is overdone (he is apt to totter with passion), and he mumbles, but this is not an outstanding note. (*At the Ethel Barrymore.*)

You Can't Take It With You

ANOTHER revival—Fred Stone's at the City Center—proves that this Kaufman-Hart hit is still funny; and although the performance seemed to me somewhat stock, it drew roars from the house. An added vaudeville arrangement at the end is fun, particularly for those who, like me, can remember owing the height of every holiday to this indomitable trouper. (*At the City Center.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

The Girls and Their Affairs

EVERY now and then Hollywood snatches a bit of fluff, dresses it up beautifully and passes it off as entertainment. Whether or not the slick and quite inconsequential items listed below are really entertaining for you depends on what you like. These three films have one thing in common beside their slim stories and expensive productions: they toy with various phases of romance and illustrate how the female gets what she wants, even if she has to make the male think that that's what he wants too.

"A Royal Scandal" reveals an episode in the life of Catherine the Great, no doubt an imaginary episode but one that is similar to any of the romantic interludes to be found in the legends of fabulous Catherine. Into her palace and life dashes a young lieutenant from the provinces, bent on warning her against plotting generals. She quickly becomes more interested in him than in his 35-page reports. Anyway minor revolutions are an every-day occurrence in Catherine's régime. So perhaps are handsome young men like this lieutenant who rapidly becomes a captain, major, colonel, general. And then just as rapidly is deflated. The script, written by Edwin Justus Mayer from an Hungarian play, suggests a series of wisecracks more than a movie, and Otto Preminger has directed it without concern for cinema values. Although Ernst Lubitsch produced, one looks in vain for the famous "touch," particularly since the wit and *doubles entendres* grow rather tiresome. Story and situation are stretched too thin and the movie seldom moves. Tallulah Bankhead in a series of elegant gowns doesn't suggest the earthy Catherine of history, but does give a brilliant portrayal of a 37-year-old nymphomaniac. William Eythe is properly boyish, ardent, dull and disillusioned as the confused officer who is crushed at learning that his greatest gift is a white uniform, not social reform. Anne Baxter, in a small rôle as the lieutenant's fiancée, has her big moment when she tells off the czarina. The film's best performance and some of its cleverest lines are given by Charles Coburn who understands exactly what is what with his empress.

"Without Love" dallies with a single theme too, but manages to seem very amusing because of its bright performances and snappy repartee. Unfortunately its cracks occasionally stoop to vulgarity which only heightens the impression that film makers will use any expedient to make audiences overlook a skimpy plot. The script is by Donald Ogden Stewart, based on Philip Barry's play, concerns an unconventional scientist, who will have nothing to do with love because a devastating affair showed him the worst of it, and a young widow, who hasn't cracked a smile in years and wants no love because she's already had the best of it. Their marriage, based on honesty, courage, hard work, companionship, independence, etc., etc., is an arrangement whereby these two modern Curies (but without love) can live together and toil over an oxygen mask he's perfecting. The statement and restatement of the theme grows wearisom, especially since we know and they must know that eventually she is going to get jealous of the flame from his past and emulate her to win him. The rôles are made to order for Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy, and are played to perfection, with his blunt humor and simple frankness contrasting beautifully with her chaste aloofness and arty finesse. Keenan Wynn and Lucille Ball contribute effectively in supporting rôles. Lawrence A. Weingarten's production is excellent. Although Director Harold Bucquet manages to make something cinematic of all this talkiness, I wish he could have avoided at least a third of the padding.

Joan Fontaine is the Susan whose affairs are discussed again and again in *"The Affairs of Susan."* And I mean again. As the picture opens, Walter Abel, an airplane manufacturer who is about to marry a chic and popular actress, is somewhat disconcerted to hear greatly varied descriptions of her from three former loves. So that he won't make the mistakes which caused them to lose Susan, the stuffy manufacturer invites the three men to his bache-

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lor dinner, listens to their stories. In lengthy, frequently tedious flashbacks, we see how the naïve New England girl married the theatrical producer (George Brent), became an actress, then a sophisticated divorcee who led a western he-man (Don De Fore) on a merry chase, and then changed again to the intellectual type under the influence of a Greenwich Village writer (Dennis O'Keefe). While Susan seems to be a chameleon changing with every man and background, it is really she who has the four men running and adjusting themselves to her whims. Miss Fontaine appears in a series of costumes (designed by Edith Head) that are guaranteed to make women drool, but I'm afraid the picture has little else to offer. Needless to say, marriage gets tossed about pretty lightly as the script tries to be too, too blasé. In an effort to make everything smart and glossy, Director William A. Seiter forgot to give his characters any depth whatsoever. Lovely Joan Fontaine shows she can handle herself well in this her first comedy assignment, but strangely enough as young Susan she plays the unworldly child of nature (a rôle with which she is familiar) without any conviction. The main trouble with "The Affairs" is that its makers were carried away by its star and one line from the script: "Just looking at you is topnotch entertainment."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Editors' Choice

THE YOUNG JEFFERSON: 1743-1790. *Claude G. Bowers. Houghton.* $3.75.

A MINIATURE HISTORY OF THE WAR. *R. C. K. Ensor. Oxford.* $1.50.

First Part Last

MR. BOWERS has finally given us the last volume of his biography of Jefferson, a volume covering Jefferson's youth and early years of service to the new nation he so greatly helped to found. The author's earlier two volumes covered Jefferson's major struggle with Hamilton ("Jefferson and Hamilton") and Jefferson's achievements as President ("Jefferson in Power"). Mr. Bowers's work, for which every American must be grateful, is readable and comprehensive; what it lacks is a certain magistral play of the imagination which is perhaps the principal element required to make a biography "definitive." To say this much, however, is merely to say that there is still room for a great book on Jefferson and that we have not as yet any such book; it is not in any way to belittle Mr. Bowers's real achievement.

Of the three volumes the present one, "The Young Jefferson," is the most attractive. The controversy with Hamilton, though reflecting a continuing and central struggle in human affairs, is necessarily less human and therefore somewhat duller than an account of the very charming youth and life Jefferson enjoyed during Virginia's golden age, as well the stirring days he spent in Paris during the honeymoon of the Revolution. Jefferson's later years were almost exclusively devoted to matters of state. His wife was dead, and he was forced largely to remain away from his beloved Monticello. The services he rendered were of inestimable worth, but reading about them is far less amusing than reading about his affection for Maria Cosway, his devotion to Mrs. Jefferson, his building of Monticello, his European travels, his delightful relations with the German mercenaries prisoners of war who were quartered during our Revolution near Jefferson's Virginia properties. The latter episode, by the way, should be drawn to the attention of Mr. Walter Winchell and other American personages of today who are so deeply concerned lest we "coddle" our own war prisoners.

In the final analysis Mr. Bowers's present volume really does little to explain how a genius like Jefferson's comes into being. Probably such a phenomenon is inexplicable, anyway. We are given a very complete account of his education, and we realize from this how great a part sheer application and hard work played in preparing one of the finest minds America has ever seen. Indeed the normal university or college student of today, if anyone were to suggest that he do half the work Jefferson assigned himself after he left William and Mary, would think that a full-dress student revolution would be altogether in order.

An aspect of our early political life which Mr. Bowers properly elaborates is the extraordinary decency of attitude between political opponents, and in this Jefferson especially shone. No matter how deeply he might differ with a political opponent, he never allowed such differences to affect his personal fondness for the man or esteem for the man's talents. Thus we find him recommending Hamilton as an attorney to a friend who needed a good lawyer in New York, and in his first election as Governor of Virginia, he wrote his defeated opponent an extraordinary letter specifically dissociating himself from the heated comments of some of his own supporters and assuring his rival of his own deep personal regard.

Of course Mr. Bowers can be accused of hero worship. But since the hero he worships really was a hero, this does little harm. Its most unfortunate effect is somewhat to distort the picture we get of those who did not admire Jefferson as much as we do, and this applies particularly to Gouverneur Morris. In this connection Mr. Bowers peculiarly betrays the limitations of his own mind. At one point he remarks that Morris said "he was 'opposed to Democracy' because of his regard for liberty—whatever that might mean." If Mr. Bowers really doesn't know what Morris meant, one can only recommend to him that he read Aristotle.

Neat Capsule

IF ONE were to write a really brief history of the first five years of this war, he would have to do so on a specific level of interpretation, for it is obvious that he would have to prescind from the details. He could, perhaps, view this war as the end result of man's development of a machine which he has allowed to become his master, and he could point out that henceforth only ethical considerations are of much use in preventing another holocaust. Or this war can be presented in highly moralistic terms as the direct result of modern man's ignoring of his Maker or as the inexorable end-product of the acceptance of "idealism," in the strictly technical sense of that philosophic term. An interpretative historian might even distinguish between the Western and Eastern phases of the war: in the first pent-up aspirations to wide domination by impoverished dictator-led peoples are put down by a strange coalition of capitalists and state socialists inspired in part by humanitarian motives, in part by the determination to preserve such personal liberties

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as they have and to develop the natural resources which they enjoy in such abundance; in the East a dynamic new Eastern imperialism almost succeeded in administering the coup de grace to an antiquated Western imperialism which will try after hostilities to regain in some measure its former precarious state. And in the final phases Japan and Germany are alike in yielding not so much to superior inspiration as to overwhelming material might. The author of "A Miniature History of the War" is less ambitious. His neat interpretation of the war is simply on the level of strategy.

R. C. K. Ensor relates this war primarily to the character of mass production. He shows how the initial advantage was all with the aggressors, who, by setting the date for the outbreak of hostilities, could have their new models coming off the assembly lines at peak production as the first shot was fired. Because of the nature of the mass production process the Allies then required from two to three years to reach a comparable state. It was blitzkrieg planned to the utmost degree of efficacy. Only the determination manifested in the Battle of Britain and at Stalingrad, plus certain fatal blunders at crucial moments on Germany's part enabled the increasingly United Nations to hold on until they had reached parity in materiel. One of Mr. Ensor's most interesting suggestions is that Germany might easily have succeeded in defeating Britain right *after* Dunkirk if she had crossed the Channel before tackling France. After achieving parity England and Russia first "freed their hands"; second, we landed in Italy and Germany's last Russian offensive came acropper; finally Rome fell, we landed in Normandy and a Russian offensive cleared White Russia—in the early summer of 1944 the Allies went on the offensive to stay. Our recovery in the Pacific was slower but unmistakable. Mr. Ensor's summary is extremely able. So the first job was to hold back the aggressors sufficiently while all-out production got under way at home and with friendly neutrals. Then, as parity in production drew near, to sweep back the invaders toward their own frontiers; finally to take the initiative with superior matériel. Everyone came to agree as to the task; the young men were sent forth to be maimed, blinded, killed. Can the Allies this time make it a real victory by achieving lasting peace?

What conclusion can be drawn from the strict correlation between modern war and mass production? The most obvious is probably the most important. Since the waging of modern war requires the amassing of guns and machines, preparations should be readily detectable. Observers from the international organization must therefore be allowed in adequate numbers to visit all parts of every nation. This would apply to Russia and the United States as well as to Germany and Japan. There is no guarantee, of course, that even when the signs are unmistakable, other nations or representatives of the world organization will risk another war to squelch an aggressor before he gets his start. For there is little in man's history to indicate that future generations can be counted on to learn from a study of this most terrible of all wars any more than we have profited much from a study of our recent past. Yet there is always a chance, and self-interest at that future crisis may be enlightened and realistic enough to carry the day. As war grows increasingly mechanical and ever more intensely destructive of material and spiritual values, every likely means of preventing its recurrence must be utilized to the utmost.

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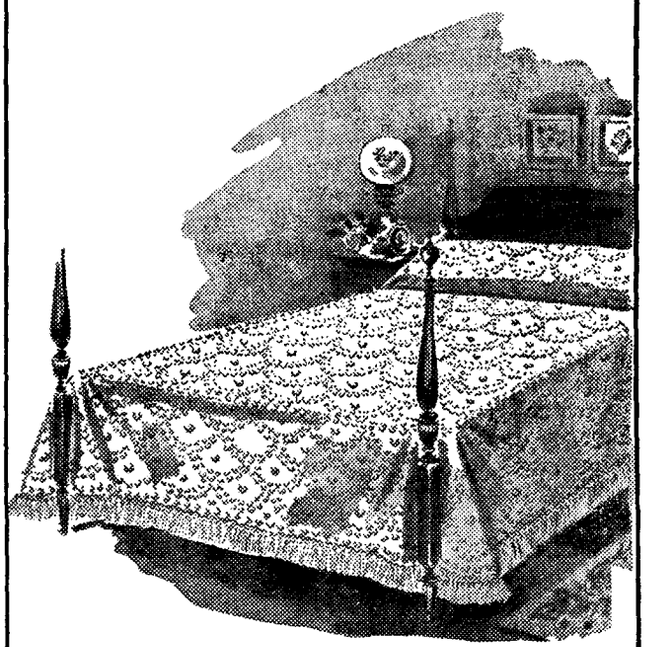

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More Books of the Week

A Rising Wind. Walter White. Doubleday. $2.00.

WALTER WHITE of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has taken the title and conclusions of his book from a sentence of Thomas Wolfe's which was expanded by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt (New York *Herald Tribune,* September 29, 1941): ". . . a wind is rising and the rivers flow."

"Yes," said Mrs. Roosevelt, "a wind is rising throughout the world of free men everywhere, and they will not be kept in bondage. The rivers flow in the democracies that now exist through to those who are held temporarily in slavery and on to the deluded human beings who are voluntary slaves. . . . *Democracy shall triumph.*" (Italics mine.)

Mr. White is without a doubt the best lobbyist that the colored people have developed in this country. Engaged by the Association when James Weldon Johnson, William Pickens and W. E. B. DuBois were in their prime, the story goes that Mr. White was selected because he was *white enough* to move around and among race riots and lynchings as a *white* man, and get the "dope." In this type of work he was second to none.

Made white by nature but "Negro" by social environment in a small Georgia town, Mr. White and many others like him elected to remain Negro. A "border-line case," our anthropologists would argue; but Walter White is the best proof in the world that race pride and race prejudice are psychological phenomena. For here is a *white man* burning red hot as a Negro.

"A Rising Wind" pictures better than any other reporting of this war the state of mind of the educated American Negro in the Army. With characteristic irony, we read that the Negro soldiers pretend to believe that the white soldiers accuse them of having tails, like monkeys. Since American Negro low-brow humor has always accused West Indian Negroes of this extra fixture, somehow we doubt that even the English were hearing this for the first time.

It is believable when we read that American officers, brought up believing that Negroes are subhuman, would try to picture to Europeans a race of "funny men" who laughed or raped with equal facility.

The United States Army got deep into the mire of prejudice during World War I. But the New York *Times* (March 18, 1945) reported that "white and Negro infantrymen are fighting shoulder to shoulder in some infantry divisions of the First United States Army on the Western Front," thus making, we hope forever, a lasting break in our psychologically brutal policy of handling the Negro soldier. Mr. White's book treats this question extensively. Does the answer lie in the education of the Negro?

The prejudice in America against a Negro with or without education is deep-seated. The college-trained Negro might circulate freely among his own set and to a degree among the more radical whites. But there remain cliques of Government officials and Army officers drawn from the poor-white Southern *and Northern* gentry who rival the Indian civil service, apparently, in hatefulness and arrogance.

Hence, the educated Negro faces a dilemma. The whites on the whole reject his leadership. In the armed forces in the past, the Negro officer could command only Negro units, while some white men like to point out that Negroes are best led by white men. In the much whispered-about 92nd Division, where a few Negroes held line commands, 75 percent of the enlisted men were semi-illiterate, and 15 percent illiterate, a civilian aide to the Secretary of War is quoted as saying. Who could make a comparison, even? With Negro aviators, we have a different story: The educated Negro is simply an educated man who happens to be a Negro. Is the American "race problem," then, the problem of getting the Southern States to educate the Southern Negro?

As time moves on, the educated Negro tends increasingly to revolt against the "Bourbon" South and lately against Northern apologists for this backward area. If there is a definite trend of Negroes to direct action and revolt, would it point to alliance with the Northern proletariat? The South fears another carpet-bag era, and conservative Negroes tend to share with them this fear.

Mr. White does not indicate this trend. He visualizes on an international scale a rising tide of color: "World War II has given to the Negro a sense of kinship with other colored—and also oppressed—peoples of the world."

And also, "The Negro soldier is convinced that as time proceeds that identification of interests will spread even among some brown and yellow peoples who today refuse to see the connection between their exploitation by white nations and discrimination against the Negro in the United States."

Is this the road to the solution of world race problems, or is the unity of the colored races as fantastic as the unity of the white races? Is the problem of race basically economic, as the communists argue, or is it a consequence of the breakdown of Europe's spiritual power which, some Catholics argue, came with the Renaissance?

The "rising tide of color" was the menace pictured by Europe and America following the consciousness of the spiritual if not economic decline of the Western world beginning with World War I. Mr. White has reversed the banner. Using Wendell Willkie as a prophet, he sees a rise of colonial peoples demanding social justice in Asia and Africa and the United States.

Where will the races meet after this war, in madness or in a spirit of mutual responsibility? Walter White has toyed with and enlarged for the popular reader the Pan-Africa dream of W. E. B. DuBois, which followed the last war. Will we blend this with Oswald Spengler, and drum out civilization? Is this the decline of the West? Will we spend the next century killing off colored people until the last gallon of high-octane gas is gone?

Now, where is the Christian power? Does it not seem that the militant Negro in America has lost his faith in the Cross? Will it be the Colored Commune? Do we still allow the white man's pride of race to drive large segments of the colored world to racism? After Japan, will it be America, then Africa? This, in the main, is Walter White's challenge. GEORGE STREATOR.

Man and the Soil. Karl B. Mickey. International Harvester Company.

"MAN and the Soil" is a well substantiated plea for soil conservation. It contains a neat digest of the different types of erosion and of methods of erosion control, as well as other technical data, popularly presented. While such information is handy to have around,

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it is hardly enough to persuade rural pastors, teachers and leaders, or even city folks, to write to the Public Relations Department, IHC (180 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 1) for a free copy of Mr. Mickey's 107-page booklet. But it is worth writing for, you city dwellers too, for it is a skilful blending of facts from history concerning soil erosion and human "erosion."

Historically, the disastrous man-made erosions have accompanied the destruction of a free peasantry and the domination by large scale, absentee owned and slave operated farms. The Southern plantation is our contribution to the history of soil erosion, but it is not our only one. Erosion exists on family sized farms too. (It is mean of me to suggest that one of the reasons that family operators in the United States have exploited their soil is that they were high pressured into buying excessive amounts of International Harvester machinery, often ill adapted to soil conservation and always expensive. But it is true.) Much soil mining comes from ignorance, not from a profit motive. The difference is that owner-operators can be educated to be stewards of the land, and they are being so through the Soil Conservation Service, an agency for which Mr. Mickey has many good words. But the soil conservation agents agree that tenants and absentee owners are the two most difficult groups to interest in conservation. Land use is, as the author states, "at bottom a problem of ethics." No one has the right to exploit the soil, and the state has the duty to prevent abuse. It takes planning; it takes cooperation; it takes a national interest. Mr. Mickey's booklet should do much to arouse that interest.

International Harvester deserves a word of commendation. One is always uneasy over free publications from big business. What message is the company trying to put across? What witch hunt is imperative at once? With a few obvious exceptions, this booklet is free of propaganda, and the introduction has the refreshing frankness of a man of the soil: "International Harvester . . . realizes that impoverished farms make poor markets for farm machinery." For such honesty, many thanks.

EMERSON HYNES.

A Short History of the United States. Allan Nevins and Henry S. Commager. Modern. $.95.

ORIGINALLY issued in 1942, the 1945 edition of the book by Nevins and Commager brings the work down to August, 1944. The twenty-one chapters include the outstanding developments from the planting of the colonies to the events of World War II. Despite the long period treated, there is nothing superficial about the analyses advanced. Every chapter is a brief but comprehensive exposition; the book is informational but not statistical; interesting and yet altogether reliable. P. K.

CONTRIBUTORS

Henri BERNSTEIN is a French dramatist. He was born in Paris in 1876 and is principally known for such plays as "Le Detour," "Le Voleur," "Sampson," "L'Assaut," "Judith," "Le Venin." He is President of the French-American Club, which is affiliated with the Provisional Government of the French Republic.

Jacques MARITAIN has often appeared in the columns of THE COMMONWEAL. He has now left this country to assume his duties as French Ambassador to the Vatican. Perhaps his best known books are "True Humanism," "The Degrees of Knowledge," "Science and Wisdom."

George STREATOR is at present working for the War Production Board.

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